



Innovation Celebrated in Marrakesh as UN Tourism Backs Next Generation of Startups

Marrakech, Morocco, April 24, 2026 – UN Tourism has further advanced its focus on innovation and investment as central pillars of a more competitive, inclusive and sustainable tourism sector. That commitment was on full display in Marrakech, where the International Conference on Technological Innovation and Tourism Investments brought together leading figures from tourism, investment and technology to shape the future of the sector.

The Conference also saw the announcement of the winners of the National Start-up Competition, recognising innovation across digital tourism, leisure gaming and Moroccan gastronomy. Selected from a pool of highly innovative startups, they stood out for advancing these sectors and bringing Moroccan creativity to the global stage.

The overall winner, **Beyond the Map** was recognized for its success in combining augmented reality AI agents, and text-to-speech to offer travellers immersive experiences of historical landmarks and cultural heritage. In the “Gaming for Leisure” category, winning start-up **Mossika** offers online music education, offering a deeply human approach and connecting learners with musicians and their cultures. And in the “Moroccan Gastronomy Category”, **Medina Mirage** was named the winner, in recognition of its effective use of technology to craft immersive dining experiences for tourists.

Prior to the Conference, all finalists took part in masterclasses and then one-to-one mentoring from Bridge for Billions. Moving forward, the finalists will be supported through targeted mentoring from Les Roches and Spark, while joining the UN Tourism Innovation Network, unlocking access to global expertise, strategic partnerships and pathways to scale.

Focus Now on Innovation in Rural Tourism

In addition to the competition announcements, UN Tourism introduced the Morocco National UN Tourism Startup Competition: Rural & Community Tourism Innovation Challenge. This competition focuses on supporting startups that promote rural and community-based tourism, encouraging innovative approaches that foster sustainable tourism while benefiting local communities.